

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 27, 2022

The Honorable Rosa L. DeLauro
Chair
Committee on Appropriations
H-307 The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Kay Granger
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
H-307 The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Tom Cole
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human
Services, Education
Committee on Appropriations
2358-B Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chair DeLauro, Ranking Member Granger, and Ranking Member Cole,

As you begin crafting the fiscal year 2023 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies appropriations bill, I respectfully request that you consider providing \$898,000 for capital investments to establish a Multidisciplinary Lyme and Tick-Borne Disease Treatment Center at State University of New York (SUNY) Upstate Medical University, located at 725 Irving Street, Syracuse, New York 13210.

The \$898,000 in requested funding would be used by SUNY Upstate toward the design, construction, and equipment costs associated with establishing the new Multidisciplinary Lyme and Tick-Borne Disease Treatment Center. This new center would centralize and supplement SUNY Upstate's existing resources for combatting tick-borne disease, including their Vector Biocontainment Laboratory, which is one of the few Biosafety Level 3 labs in New York, and the nation as a whole, devoted to studying both vector-borne and zoonotic pathogens. This preexisting expertise will allow SUNY Upstate to devote federal funds that are received for the project toward necessary capital investments.

This project would be a valuable use of taxpayer funds because it would provide a comprehensive research and care center to combat diseases that are rapidly becoming endemic in Central New York and throughout the United States. According to the federal Tick-Borne Disease (TBD) Working Group's 2020 Report to Congress, documented US cases of Lyme and other tick-borne diseases have risen dramatically in recent years, and the actual number of annual cases has been estimated at 8 to 12 times higher than the number of reported cases.

Circumstances are equally dire in Central New York, with nearly 37% of ticks tested by SUNY Upstate in the first five months of 2021 carrying disease-causing virus or bacteria. While tick-borne diseases have increasingly become a major cause of patient morbidity and mortality, laboratory resources to properly research, diagnose, and treat these illnesses remain underfunded. This project would allow SUNY Upstate Medical University to advance its innovative approach to the study and treatment of Lyme and tick-borne diseases and increase the accessibility of care for thousands of patients.

I certify that neither I nor my immediate family has any financial interest in this project. Furthermore, I am not aware of any other Member of Congress submitting a request for this purpose. Thank you for your time and consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "John Katko", is positioned above a horizontal line.

John Katko
Member of Congress